

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 6 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendments and motion specified in the order of December 14 regarding H.R. 3590; that prior to each vote, there be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that after the first vote in the sequence, the succeeding votes be limited to 10 minutes each; further, that all provisions of the December 14 order remain in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, some issues we deal with here in the Senate are unbelievably complicated. This one is not. This is painfully simple, the question of whether the American people should be charged and continue paying the highest prices in the world for brand-name prescription drugs—my amendment says no—from other countries in which there is a safe chain of custody that is identical to ours. The American people ought to have the freedom to shop for those lower priced FDA-approved drugs that are sold there at a fraction of the price.

I especially wish to thank Senator BEGICH from Alaska for his work. This is bipartisan, with a broad number of Democrats and Republicans working on this importation of prescription drugs bill, giving the American people the freedom to acquire lower priced drugs. Senator BEGICH has been a significant part of that effort. I want to say thanks to him for his work on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, if I could ask a question of the Senator from North Dakota.

I say to the Senator, I appreciate his comments, and I think he is right. Of all the complexity of this bill, this seems so simple. I know when I was mayor, we worked on this issue. It seems logical for Alaska. Since we border so much of Canada, it seems logical to do what we can in this arena.

I know the Senator stated these comments before, but I think it is important for especially my viewers who are now watching from Alaska, with the 4-hour difference. But the Senator talked about the savings. There are savings to the taxpayers that are very clear, and there are savings to the consumer, which is even more significant. Can the Senator remind me what those numbers are? I think I have them. I want to be sure, as I talk about this bill.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this amendment will save \$100 billion in 10 years, nearly \$20 billion for the Federal Government and nearly \$80 billion for the American consumers.

Mr. BEGICH. That is what this health care bill is about, not only getting good-quality care but also finding those opportunities, as we just heard one Senator talk about, bending that

cost curve—I hate that term—but it is impacting the consumers in a positive way by \$80 billion.

The other thing I have heard a lot about on the floor—and the Senator talked quickly about it—is the chain of control, which I drove here for 19 days with my family through Canada, and 5 days we bought some drugs when I had a cold, but I am still here. I am standing. I am healthy. Remind me of that chain of control for these drugs and where they are produced.

Mr. DORGAN. I would say to the Senator from Alaska, these prescription drugs would be able to be reimported from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the European countries that have identical chains of custody to our chain of custody so that there is safety.

It is also the case that we are in politics, so the floor of the Senate is the place of a lot of tall tales. I understand that. I have been in politics for a long time.

Mr. BEGICH. Yes, I have learned that as a new Member.

Mr. DORGAN. But early on, one of my colleagues said this is about untested, unregulated drugs coming from, oh, parts of the Soviet Union. That is so unbelievable. It is not describing the amendment I have offered. We are talking about a chain of custody that is identical to the United States. When that is the case—if it is the case—why would the American people not have the freedom to acquire that same drug when it is sold at one-tenth the price, one-fifth, one-third, or one-half the price? Why not give the American people that freedom?

Mr. BEGICH. The Senator from North Dakota and I have just one last question. Even though we did not ask for a colloquy, this is kind of a colloquy, and I appreciate the back-and-forth.

This is one reason I support this bill—not only today but many months ago—for all the reasons the Senator just laid out. The control is there. The protection to the consumer is there. The savings to the consumer and the taxpayer are enormous, as we deal with these issues. If there is one thing I have heard over and over through e-mails and correspondence to my office, it is: Help us save on prescription drugs.

To emphasize that point once more, to make sure I have the numbers right, over 10 years, between the Federal Government and the consumer, it is over \$100 billion.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the savings is over \$100 billion. Look, I want the pharmaceutical industry to do well, to make profits, to make prescription drugs. I just want fair pricing for the American people. I do not have a beef with the industry. I want them to do well. I want them, however, to give the American people a fair price because we are paying the highest prices in the world for brand-name prescription drugs, and I think it is flat

out unfair. This amendment will fix that.

There is a competing amendment that nullifies it, that simply says all this is going to go away and we are done with this bill and nothing has happened to put the brakes on prescription drug prices.

I hope my colleagues will stand with me and with the American people saying: We support fair drug prices for the American people. That is what we are going to vote on in a few minutes.

I appreciate the questions from the Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Thank you, Mr. President. And I thank the Senator from North Dakota for allowing me these questions and again clarifying for my residents in Alaska how important this bill is. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: The order that was just entered provided for 2 minutes, equally divided, before, I suppose, the vote on each of the amendments. Is that in addition to or is that a part of the time that has been allocated to Senators?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In addition to.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. BAUCUS. So, Mr. President, if the Senator from Montana wishes to speak on his amendment, he has 5 minutes, plus 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five minutes plus 1 minute.

Mr. BAUCUS. Excuse me. The time is equally divided. Thank you.

Mr. President, I just want to make it as clear as I can that the Congressional Budget Office essentially says that premiums will go down for about 93 percent of Americans. I say that because I think my good friend from Idaho was leaving a different impression.

But let me just summarize what CBO says. I would put a chart that CBO provided in the RECORD, but under the Senate rules we cannot put charts in the RECORD. So I am just going to summarize what this chart says.

OK. Seventy percent of Americans will get their health insurance in what is called the large group market. That is people who work for larger employers—70 percent. CBO said for that 70 percent of Americans, premiums will go down a little bit. It will be about a 3-percent reduction in premiums.

The next group of Americans getting health insurance are in what is called the small group market. Those are people in small companies, small businesses, primarily. That is where 13 percent of Americans get their insurance. CBO says for that 13 percent, maybe the premiums will go up between 1 percent or down 2 percentage points overall. But for those folks, those small businesspeople who get tax credits—